

# Quaker Arts Network Annual Report 2018-19

## Status of QAN

Our last AGM approved our constitution and asked the committee to apply for Quaker Recognised Body status for the Quaker Arts Network. This was approved by Meeting for Sufferings in November 2018.

The committee decided in November that for the time being our priorities should be

- to build our communications and community (including reaching out to younger Friends)
- to organise an AGM as part of a larger event (which would be at least a day long), and
- organise an event at BYM .

## Communications

Communications has been a major activity, and we are delighted with our new website that went live in September 2018. This allows for news and comments, and gives read access to Facebook posts (even for those not on Facebook) as well as other key information.

Posts to the Events page were slow to take off, and the Committee decided as an experiment to advertise regularly in the Friend every couple of months to draw attention to forthcoming events on the page. We hope that this will encourage Friends to look at it regularly and to post arts events with Quaker links, at the earliest opportunity. This can then be used as a free and effective way to publicise events. Courses, workshops, concerts, exhibitions, plays, poetry readings and other events are all welcome. Friends are encouraged to post their events on website and to encourage others to do so too. As well as reaching wider audiences of particular events, this can also help illustrate the range of arts activities Friends are engaged in, build contacts, and reduce the sense of isolation that has sometimes been experienced by Quaker artists.

Our newsletter, website and other communications have also proved valuable in helping others to commission artworks and find collaborators from time to time. We have been able to support community art projects such as the Collateral Damage Project, in which around 5000 textile white poppies were displayed in the corridors of Friends House to honour victims of wars since Works War One. QAN members and others worked hard to collate and hang these, and it was a moving experience.

We are grateful to June Buffery who has continued to maintain our membership and mailing list, as well as acting as our treasurer and to Jez Smith who has done Mailchimp mailings for us. Elena Krungold has maintained and updated the website (supported by Michael Wood, where necessary). These roles are essential for QAN to function.

The Facebook page can be a useful complement to the website, and a number of Friends have found QAN in this way. We encourage Friends to like the page and share posts on it. The QAN Facebook groups have been less successful and we are laying them down. We have had some difficulties with Instagram though a few Friends have found it useful. The committee has therefore not prioritised this. If one or two Friends active in social media are willing to take this on and/or to help more generally with social media, offers would be welcome.

## Events

Our 2018 AGM was held at Friends House on 1 September and was a good opportunity for people to meet and share experiences, advice and interest. Unfortunately some were prevented at the last minute by travel problems. There seemed to be interest in developing some kind of writers' group or critical friends/co-mentoring for writers, but this did not develop further. It was delightful to hear a wide variety of short performances of music, song, poetry and spoken word from many of those present, and interesting to hear of the travelling ministry of Friend May Hasbrook from the USA. What a range of gifts there is among us! It was also pleasing to see the exhibition of Quaker art that had been displayed at Greenbelt by Quaker Life earlier in the summer. We hope to see this resource made available for meetings to borrow in future.

A small group of Friends visited the Turner Contemporary Gallery in Margate in December and were taken on a guided tour of the Patrick Heron exhibition. It was a most enjoyable event. Friends willing to arrange similar local events are encouraged to do so, and to publicise them through the

network. Providing opportunities for some of us to meet in this way can strengthen our community as well as bringing joy.

Our lunchtime event at BYM on Sunday 26th May 2019 was so well-attended that many Friends were turned away. It was good to hear from some Friends about events and opportunities past and future, and to meet new faces. Time did not allow for in-depth discussion of some of the questions raised, but it was clear that the arts can speak to people at a visceral level, from which new discernment, ministry and witness can spring. They can enable and encourage action as well as nurturing us spiritually and giving pleasure. We hope that the arts will be able to make a more substantial contribution to Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2020.

### **Seeking Routes exhibition**

Swarthmoor Hall approached QAN for support in putting on an exhibition of Quaker art in summer 2019. The Committee felt it was unable to take this on itself, but was pleased to appoint Sally Oliver to lead the curation of an exhibition relating to Quaker experience and action on environmental sustainability, and to contribute to funding the exhibition, from the Leaveners' legacy. We are delighted to hear of the substantial response from many Quaker artists and that as well as the exhibition a lively programme of events has been organised. We are grateful to Friends from Swarthmoor Meeting for supporting us in putting on the workshops to complement the exhibition on its opening day.

### **Projects**

The committee agreed to endorse and publicise the Loving Earth Project, a project aiming to help people engage more deeply and widely with the environmental breakdown, through a community textile project. The first display of Loving Earth panels will be at Swarthmoor Hall, and further developments are in the pipeline.

Friends in Tune continues to be a project endorsed and supported by QAN. It is also now a Quaker Recognised Body in its own right. Singing workshops continue at Quaker meetings around the country and ambitious plans are on the way for 2020.

### **Small grants**

The committee agreed exceptionally to offer a small grant to Lucy Aphramor to support her in developing new material for spoken word performance on environmental issues and the arms trade, with a view to helping her contribute to specific events during 2019. Grant-giving could be an area for future development but the committee does not feel it is currently in a position to offer grants on a regular basis. To do so, a process and criteria for awarding grants equitably would be needed, as would separate group willing to administer and make discernment on grant applications. We would also need to develop a more regular income stream. This matter will be put to the AGM.

### **Membership**

In the summer of 2019, QAN membership was around 320, a slight increase on last year. It has been lovely to be able to engage with a wider range of members, with varied arts interests. p about 20 since last year.

Committee members were :

June Buffery (Treasurer and Membership Secretary)

Caroline Coode

Alec Davison

Kate Green (Assistant Clerk from January 2019)

Elena Krumgold

John Lampen

Linda Murgatroyd (clerk).

Linda Murgatroyd  
Clerk